DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 920 HE 026 658

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TITLE Campus Community and Student Priorities at a Metropolitan University. AIR 1993 Annual Forum Paper.
PUB DATE May 93
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (33rd, Chicago, IL, May 16-19, 1993).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Students; *Community Satisfaction; Commuter Colleges; Educational Environment; Higher Education; Needs Assessment; Non Traditional Students; Social Influences; *Student College Relationship; Student Needs; *Student Reaction; Surveys; Urban Universities
IDENTIFIERS *AIR Forum

ABSTRACT

A student survey at a metropolitan university examined priorities of both traditional and non-traditional students; the survey resulted from anxieties expressed by some students about not having a traditional college experience. The administration was trying to decide whether to allocate resources to create a football program within this commuter, urban university. The study focused on student priorities as a way to evaluate the relative importance to students of differing aspects of campus life. Results indicated that most students selected academic enhancements over social and recreational ones, but students were not monolithic in their responses. Subcommunities emerged with different academic emphases and different social priorities. Students' ideas about community were more closely associated with social interactions among family, college and non-college friends, and colleagues at work rather than with ideas about an academic or intellectual community. Results suggest that the development of academic communities at college campuses, as well as future student support priority determinations, will need to take into account the fact that no one issue is predominant for the increasing numbers of students that have significant off-campus obligations. (Contains nine references.) (Author/GLR)

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CAMPUS COMMUNITY AND STUDENT PRIORITIES AT A METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

ED 360 920

Paper presented at the
Thirty-Third Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research
Chicago, Illinois -- May 17, 1993

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Abstract

This paper describes the results of a student survey designed to determine the priorities among a mix of traditional and non-traditional university students who voice anxieties about not having a traditional college experience. The question facing the administration in this instance was whether to create a football program. Results indicated that a majority of students would prefer academic enhancements over social and recreational ones but students were not monolithic in their responses. Subcommunities emerged with different academic emphases and different social priorities. Students' ideas about community were more closely associated with social interactions among family, college and non-college friends, and colleagues at work rather than with ideas about an academic or intellectual community. The development of academic communities at college campuses, as well as future student support priority determinations, will need to take into account the fact that no one issue is predominate for the increasing numbers of students that have significant off-campus obligations.

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This paper was presented at the Thirty-Third Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Chicago Marriott Downtown, Chicago, Illinois, May 16-19, 1993. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

Jean Endo
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CAMPUS COMMUNITY AND STUDENT PRIORITIES AT A METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Introduction

In their 1984 clarion call to the higher education community, the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education described changes in student and faculty populations that require a reexamination of the content and process of higher education. The Study Group emphasized the need for learning communities even as shifting demographics mitigated against them. The Group cited the increasing pull away from the academy due to a variety of social and cultural shifts including the reduced amount of time spent on campus by the increasingly part-time student and faculty populations.

Nearly all metropolitan area universities have been experiencing significant enrollment growth during the past decade. The growth has come from a non-traditional pool, including older students, those who are married and have children, and commuters, as well as from a traditional pool of students who are choosing to stay closer to home to manage costs, remain with family, and take advantage of the cultural and employment opportunities of the metropolitan area. These changing demographics belie more important changes in students' economic circumstances, preparation, needs, habits, and goals (Levine, 1989).

The current study of enrolled students at "Metropolitan U," a young, southeastern, exurban institution in a growing metropolitan region, was designed to address the issue of community and priorities for undergraduate and graduate students. At Metro U, 29% of students are part-time and even more, 40%, of faculty are part-time. Students continually report their dissatisfaction with not having a traditional college experience, and they question whether "community" is even possible at a "commuter school."

Community is a term with meanings that vary. Spitzberg and Thorndike, in their book, Creating Community on College Campuses (1992), present a traditional definition that includes the notion of people living in the same area sharing common values, practices, and goals. They report that the term still evokes a strong visceral response even though it is often used merely to

refer to proximity as in a neighborhood. In an academic community, the term can alternatively be used to refer to a learning community or to school spirit. Numerous focus group interviews with students at Metro U made it clear that students are most likely to use the definition of school spirit or to use it synonymously with groups of friends. Rarely do students refer to community in terms of their academic major or in terms of academically related clubs.

The importance of student involvement on campus, with peers and with faculty, although mitigated in some studies by various background variables, is well documented in the literature as being linked to such outcomes as satisfaction and retention (For example, Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1975; Terenzini and Pascarella, 1984). These concepts of community suggest more than just proximity. They suggest high levels of interaction among members having shared values and common interests. But today's metropolitan universities are characterized by heterogeneous student populations pursuing various goals while spending relatively less time on campus than their traditional counterparts due to family and work obligations.

This paper describes the results of a survey conducted to find out how students at Metro U define community, both at the university and in their broader lives, to link students' social and academic behavioral patterns with their concepts of community, and to determine student priorities for their academic and social lives. Previous student focus groups, senior and alumni surveys had shown repeatedly that students felt satisfied with their academic life but somewhat dissatisfied and disaffected with the campus community. The convergence of these issues, as embodied in an emerging student lobby for initiating a football program, resulted in a decision to focus administrative energies on students and campus life. The university's senior administrators were looking for information to guide decisions regarding the allocation of increasingly scarce resources. So, rather than assessing student satisfaction, the study focused on student priorities as a way to evaluate the relative importance to students of differing aspects of campus life.

Methodology

The study began with interviews of senior administrators to get further insight into the array of campus life issues with which they are concerned. A series of focus groups was next conducted with students to get a better understanding of the student perspective on campus community. On the basis of the input of these administrators and students the Student Life Survey was developed to elicit information on the following:

1. The source of community for students, both on and off-campus
2. Attitudes about and need for a campus community
3. Experience with community--what and with whom
4. Obstacles to achieving community
5. Participation in on- and off-campus activities
6. Priorities for academic and social/recreational life

Several demographic items were also included to provide descriptive information beyond what is available from students' registration records. These items covered family background, current living situation, employment status, and sources of tuition monies.

Three strata were defined because large differences were expected among undergraduate and graduate students, and among campus resident and commuter students: 1) campus resident students (virtually all undergraduate); 2) commuter undergraduate students; and 3) commuter graduate students. The survey was mailed to a stratified random sample of 1,888 students. An overall response rate of 50% was achieved (950 responses), with group response rates as follows: campus residents-45%; commuter undergraduates-49%; commuter graduate students-57%.

There were no statistically significant differences between the sample respondents and the overall student population in gender, ethnicity, age, class level, course load status, time of day when classes were taken, and major field of study. To restore population proportions, the responses of students within the sample strata were weighted in inverse proportion to their population representation. Specifically, since the respondents represent roughly 1/8th of all

campus residents, 1/27th of all commuter undergraduates, and 1/10th of all commuter graduate students, the weights were roughly 8:27:10, respectively.

Results

Demographic Diversity

At Metro U, minorities represent 15% of the students with almost equally sized groups of African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic students. One-third of all students are married and over one in five have children. As expected, larger numbers of graduate students are married (57%) and have children (42%), but a sizable number of commuter undergraduates are also married (27%) and many have children (19%). Over one-quarter of the respondents indicate that a language other than English was spoken in their homes.

Over three-quarters of the respondents report being currently employed, and another 10 percent said they were seeking employment. Even among campus residents, more than one-half (53%) have at least a part-time job. Among commuter students, nearly 90% are working or seeking work. Three-quarters of the commuter undergraduates and seven-eighths of the commuter graduates are presently employed.

It is against this backdrop of demographic and behavioral diversity that Metro U students approach the concept of community on campus. These student characteristics portend a wide array of student goals and objectives, as well as limited opportunities for student interaction compared to a more traditional residential university.

Sources of Community

Students were asked to identify the groups, organizations and friends that give them a sense of community from a list of university-related and non-university related items. Students then picked their top four choices from both lists. Items were scored for importance by assigning nine points to their first choice, seven to their second choice, and so on down to three for their

fourth choice. All other items that were selected but not included among their top four were assigned one point. Table 1 displays the most popular sources of community[1] for the entire sample as well as for each of the sample strata.

Overall, family and non-university friends receive the highest scores, followed by two university-related items: college friends and class-mates. Other high scoring items include friends from work, religious institutions, and off-campus neighbors. Notable differences are found among the three strata in the sample. Campus residents rate campus-related sources more highly, but they still indicate many non-campus sources of community. More graduate students find a sense of community from their work settings and rate campus sources lower than both undergraduate groups.

Large group differences were also found in the percentages of on-campus and off-campus sources selected (see Figure 1). Only campus residents selected a larger percentage of the on-campus sources. Group differences are significant for both on-campus and off-campus sources chosen, but much larger for the on-campus sources ($F=146.3$, $df=2/938$; $p<.0001$) than for the off-campus sources ($F=11.0$; $df=2/938$; $p<.0001$). Overall, there was a very small positive correlation of .11 between the percentage of on- and off-campus sources chosen. Interestingly, the correlation is higher among campus residents (.35), compared to the other groups (.14 for commuter undergraduates and .13 for commuter graduates). This suggests that to some degree, campus residents who find more community on campus also find more community off-campus, but commuter students' involvement on campus is less related to their off-campus lives.

[1]Includes items which were either selected by more than one-third of each group, or which scored higher total points than any item chosen by more than one-third of the group.

Table 1. Sources of Community[2]

	Total Points	Number Choosing	Percent Choosing
WEIGHTED TOTAL			
Family	5172	759	79.9
Non-GMU Friends	3038	641	67.5
Friends from GMU	**2397**	**579**	**61.0**
Students in My classes	**1917**	**712**	**75.0**
Friends from Off-Campus Work Site	1473	427	44.9
Friends from High School	1010	311	32.7
Church/Synagogue/Temple	990	252	26.5
Neighbors	978	329	34.6
CAMPUS RESIDENTS			
Friends from GMU	**1108**	**226**	**85.0**
Family	961	199	74.8
GMU Roommates	**945**	**205**	**77.1**
GMU Residence Hall Life	**750**	**166**	**62.4**
Non-GMU Friends	543	165	62.0
Students in my Classes	**440**	**204**	**76.7**
Friends from High School	369	143	53.8
GMU Fraternity/Sorority Life	**331**	**53**	**19.9**
GMU Clubs or Organizations	**321**	**109**	**41.0**
Informal Gatherings w/Students	**240**	**118**	**44.4**
COMMUTER UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS			
Family	1879	273	84.3
Non-GMU Friends	1126	236	72.8
Friends from GMU	**884**	**214**	**66.0**
Students in my Classes	**719**	**259**	**79.9**
Friends from Off-Campus Work Site	550	160	49.4
Friends from High School	417	119	36.7
Neighbors	336	118	36.4
COMMUTER GRADUATE STUDENTS			
Family	2288	302	83.9
Non-GMU Friends	1299	243	67.5
Friends from Off-Campus Work Site	731	189	52.5
Students in my Classes	**728**	**264**	**73.3**
Neighbors	570	156	43.3
Friends from GMU	**560**	**164**	**45.6**
Church/Synagogue/Temple	534	126	35.0

[2]**On-campus sources are emboldened**

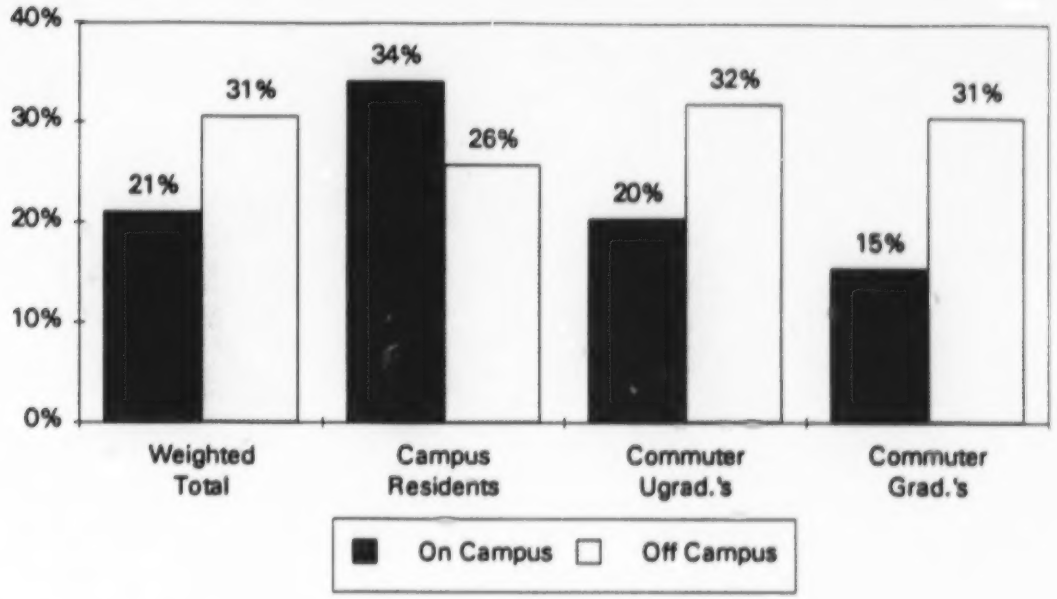

Figure 1. On-Campus and Off-Campus Sources of Community.

Participation in On-Campus and Off-Campus Activities

Students were presented with lists of on-campus and off-campus activities and asked how often they participated in each of these since the academic school year began. Separate on-campus and off-campus summative activity scales were formed by adding numerical values for students' reported frequency of participation across the listed activities as follows: 0 for "never"; 1 for "once"; 2 for "two to three times"; and 3 for "four or more times." To control for the differing number of activities in each list (14 on-campus, and 16 off-campus), the scales were adjusted to a 0 to 10 scale by dividing by the maximum possible score (14x3=42 for on-campus; 16x3=48 for off-campus) and multiplying by 10.

Spitzberg and Thorndike (1992) found significant differences between residential and commuter students regarding campus involvement in their study and at Metro U this was true for on-campus activities ($F=456.9$; $df=2/938$; $p<.0001$). The groups did not differ, though, in their levels of off-campus activity ($F=1.7$; $df=2/938$; $p=.1843$). Figure 2 shows how both residential

and commuter students clearly take advantage of the social and cultural resources of the metropolitan area. The primary difference among groups is that campus resident students add on-campus activities to their social schedules.

Participation in specific off-campus activity items suggests a student body fairly involved in the local community. Over one-third (35%) participated at least once in community or civic organization meetings or activities--this is particularly true for graduate students (46%). The correlation between the activity scales was a moderately low .20 suggesting that one's level of involvement on-campus is not closely linked to off-campus involvements. Students are not necessarily choosing to be active in one place or another. Nor are individual students generally more or less active across both locations.

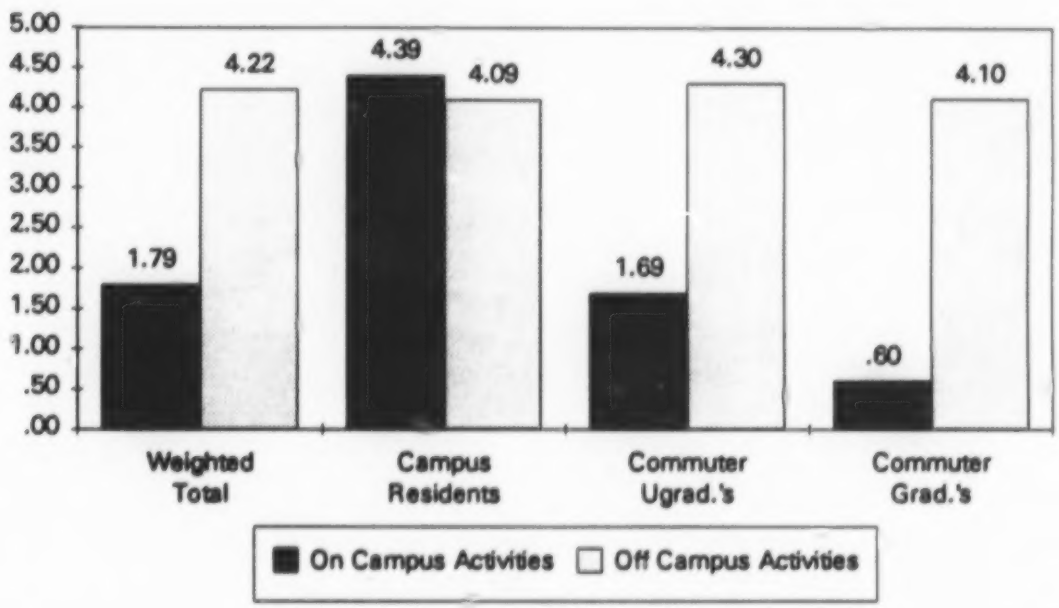

Figure 2. Participation in On-Campus and Off-Campus Activities

The association between reported sources of community and places of activity is clearly illustrated by the intercorrelations between the activity scales and the percentage of on- and off-campus sources of community shown in Table 2. The close association among campus sources of community and activity suggests that students' perceptions of campus community are closely related to their campus activity levels. The lower correlation between off-campus sources of community and levels of activity is not surprising given the more diffuse nature of the off-campus environment, including family, work, neighborhood, church, and other very different sub-environments.

Table 2. Intercorrelations Between Sources of Community and Activity Scales.

	Activity Scales	
	On-Campus	Off-Campus
Percentage of Selected Sources of Community		
On-Campus	.61	.08
Off-Campus	-.02	.37

Attitudes about Community, Employment, and Experiences with Faculty

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their attitudes toward and experiences with campus community, their employment, and their interactions with faculty. Responses for the campus community and employment items were coded according to a modified Likert scale with categories strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and not applicable. Experiences with faculty items were coded according to a frequency scale indicating the number of times the student experienced each event since the beginning of the academic year ("never," "once," "two to three times," and "four or more times"). Results for individual items were examined, and composite scales were formed using a subset of items that maximized Cronbach's alpha. Scales were converted to a 0 to 10 range to control for differing numbers of items.

Attitudes Toward Community

A majority of the total group is interested[3] in campus activities (52%), but obligations outside school (65%) and lack of time (60%) are major deterrents to becoming involved in campus life outside the classroom. Of note, over one third (35%) of the total group said they just want to take classes, not find community. This opinion distinguishes among the three subgroups more than any other. Only 5% of resident students agree with this statement, whereas 50% of graduate students do. At the same time, close to half (44%) of all students feel that campus life should be like that at traditional residential universities. Table 3 lists the items that were included in the final scale.

Table 3. Attitudes Toward Campus Community Items (alpha=.73)

1. I try to get involved on campus as much as I can
2. I live too far from GMU to make campus activities feasible.*
3. I just want to take classes at GMU; I'm not looking for a sense of community.*
4. I have been made to feel welcome by various groups on campus.
5. There are many campus activities in which I am interested.
6. My work/family obligations do not permit many activities outside of my school work.*

* *Items reverse coded before forming scale.*

Importance of Current Employment

As reported earlier, majorities of all three segments of the Metro U student body are employed. Students were asked a series of questions regarding how closely their school and work activities were related and which took precedence. Not surprisingly, Metro U students see college as a way of improving their career situation. Nearly 90% agreed that they go to school to get a better job. This symbiotic relationship between school and work is much more evident for graduate students, 76% of who agree with the statement that they go to school to advance in their

[3]Responses of agree and strongly agree are pooled for the percentages reported in this section.

current line of work. Table 4 lists the items used to construct the importance of employment scale.

Table 4. Importance of Current Employment Items (alpha=.76)

1. I go to school to advance myself in my current line of work
2. I work to support myself/family.
3. My work and my schooling are closely related
4. My job is more important to me right now than school.

Experiences with Faculty

Involvement with faculty, cited by numerous studies (see Astin, 1993, for example) as highly correlated with academic success, was a type of academic involvement that we suspected would be limited at Metro U due to students' off-campus obligations. We found that almost all students indicate having minimal social contact with faculty, such as talking with a faculty member outside class or being called by one's first name. The more involved and the more social the contact, the less likely students are to have experienced it. Table 5 shows the items included in the experiences with faculty scale.

Table 5. Experience with Faculty Items (alpha=.79)

1. I talked with a faculty member outside of class.
2. I discussed my career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.
3. I discussed ideas or intellectual issues with a faculty member outside of class.
4. I had coffee, soda, or snacks with a faculty member.
5. I went to a faculty member's house.
6. I worked with a faculty member on his or her research project.

Summary of Scales

Table 6 displays the group comparisons on the three scales considered in this section. As expected, campus resident students indicate more positive attitudes toward campus community than do both commuter groups. An even larger group difference is found for the importance of current employment scale. For commuter students, especially at the graduate level, current employment is a primary focus of their lives, and the college experience is more closely linked to their career circumstances. These findings can be associated with the earlier reported differences in rates of employment among the three sample groups.

With regard to involvement with faculty, graduate students reported more interaction with faculty compared to undergraduates but the group differences were not as large as we had expected. Perhaps the increased faculty interaction typically associated with graduate programs is counteracted by the large work commitments of this group.

Table 6. Group Comparisons on Attitude toward Campus Community, Importance of Current Employment, and Experiences with Faculty Scales.

	Weighted Total	Campus Residents	Commuter Undergrad.	Commuter Graduate	F Value	df	p value
Att. to Campus Community	6.13	7.37	6.12	5.71	56.9	2/480	.0001
Imp. of Curr. Employment	6.79	5.24	6.52	7.83	126.5	2/642	.0001
Experiences with Faculty	5.51	5.43	5.33	5.96	11.6	2/928	.0001

A notable negative correlation of -.33 exists between the attitudes toward campus community and importance of current employment scales. Table 7 shows that this correlation is slightly lower (-.11) among commuter graduate students than for the other two groups. Work obligations have a negative impact on attitudes toward campus community, especially for undergraduates. There are also large group differences in the correlation between attitudes toward community and experiences with faculty. For commuter students, especially at the graduate level, the notion of campus community is more positively linked to the amount of interaction they have

with faculty. While the association between importance of employment and experiences with faculty is small in magnitude, it is in opposite directions for commuter and resident students. For commuters, importance of employment appears to detract from time spent with faculty. This may reflect the time pressures on students who work long hours while attending school. These mixed negative and positive intercorrelations point to some of the conflicting pressures on students who are trying to balance their family, work, and higher education agendas.

Table 7. Intercorrelations among Attitude toward Campus Community, Importance of Current Employment, and Experiences with Faculty Scales.

	Weighted Total	Campus Residents	Commuter Undergrad.	Commuter Graduate
Community - Employment	-.32	-.33	-.29	-.11
Community - Exp. w/Fac.	.15	.03	.16	.31
Employment - Exp. w/Fac.	-.07	.17	-.17	-.14

Priorities for Academic and Social Life

Students were asked to indicate their priority (low, medium or high) for creating, expanding, or improving academics and academic support services, versus social, recreational, and other non-academic activities and facilities. They were then asked to rank their top four priorities within each list. Finally students picked their top four items overall from both lists and distributed 100 points among their choices. Table 8 shows the composite list of combined priorities for the overall sample as well as for each of the subgroups.

The weighted total responses suggest at least two things about the respondents to this survey. First, academics and academic supports are the overwhelming priority for students. The top five items are all academically oriented, and three of them refer to the classroom--more sections, quality instruction, and small classes. The other striking finding is how dispersed student agreement is on the priorities for the university. Only the top three items have the support of at least one-fourth of the respondents.

Table 8. Combined Academic and Social Priorities.

	Total Points	Number Choosing	Percent Choosing
WEIGHTED TOTAL			
More Class Sections	**11082**	**365**	**38.4**
Quality of Classroom Instruction	**10623**	**317**	**33.4**
Efficiency of Registration Procedures	**7221**	**266**	**28.0**
Financial Aid Opportunities	**5112**	**173**	**18.2**
Small Class Sizes	**4577**	**185**	**19.4**
GMU Football Team	4310	147	15.5
Quality of Academic Advising	**4092**	**175**	**18.4**
Library Holdings	**3929**	**162**	**17.0**
On-Campus Day Care Center	2853	112	11.7
Swimming Pool	2376	115	12.1
Lectures and Speakers	2264	120	12.6
Support Services for My Major	**2109**	**97**	**10.2**
CAMPUS RESIDENTS			
More Class Sections	**3627**	**118**	**44.4**
Quality of Classroom Instruction	**2176**	**64**	**24.1**
Efficiency of Registration Procedures	**2062**	**79**	**29.7**
Financial Aid Opportunities	**2019**	**68**	**25.6**
GMU Football Team	1711	64	24.1
Swimming Pool	1449	58	21.8
Food Services	1263	67	25.2
Small Class Sizes	**1188**	**46**	**17.3**
Weekend Social Programming	1112	59	22.2
Quality of Academic Advising	**917**	**36**	**13.5**
COMMUTER UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS			
More Class Sections	**4564**	**149**	**46.0**
Quality of Classroom Instruction	**3537**	**109**	**33.6**
Efficiency of Registration Procedures	**3118**	**112**	**34.6**
GMU Football Team	1886	64	19.8
Financial Aid Opportunities	**1878**	**62**	**19.1**
Quality of Academic Advising	**1704**	**73**	**22.5**
Small Class Sizes	**1666**	**68**	**21.0**
On-Campus Day Care Center	1023	40	12.3
Library Holdings	**921**	**43**	**13.3**
Availability of Academic Advising	**755**	**34**	**10.5**
COMMUTER GRADUATE STUDENTS			
Quality of Classroom Instruction	**5429**	**154**	**42.8**
Library Holdings	**3162**	**117**	**32.5**
More Class Sections	**2352**	**82**	**22.8**
Small Class Sizes	**1780**	**71**	**19.7**
On-Campus Day Care Center	1534	59	16.4
Financial Aid Opportunities	**1457**	**53**	**14.7**
Library Equipment	**1367**	**66**	**18.3**
Efficiency of Registration Procedures	**1354**	**55**	**15.3**
Lectures and Speakers	1310	68	18.9
Quality Computing Facilities	**1115**	**43**	**11.9**

Note. **Academic and academic support items are emboldened.**

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Academic and social priorities scales were constructed by assigning a value of 1 for low priority, 2 for medium priority, and 3 for high priority choices and summing across the items in each list. The scales were further adjusted to a 0 to 10 scale to account for the different number of choices in each list. These scales indicate the general value that students place on improving the academic and social milieus of the campus.

Consistent with the results shown in table 8, the academic priority scale had a higher overall score than the social priority scale. Figure 3 shows that this difference held for all three groups. It also shows that campus resident students indicated higher priorities in both areas compared to commuter students and they were notably higher on the social priority scale. This is not surprising given this group's highest overall investment in the campus environment, in both time and money.

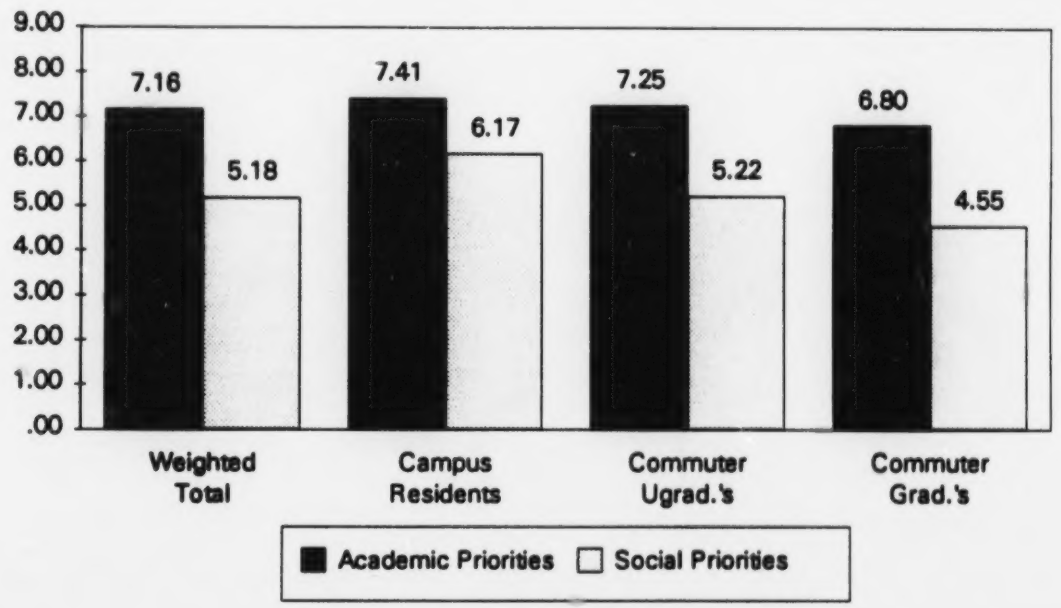

Figure 3. Group Differences in Academic and Social Priorities.

Overall, the two scales were moderately correlated at .44. The correlation is highest among the commuter graduate student sample (.55). This suggests that students show some consistency in their feelings towards wanting to see improvements in both the social and academic environments of college. This moderate association presents another setup for the conflicting influences of students' academic and social concerns. Table 9 displays the correlations between the academic priorities scale and the scales previously considered. The table also includes correlations with students' cumulative grade-point average (GPA). The table first displays the direct bivariate correlations, and then the partial correlations when controlling for social priorities.

Table 9. Correlations Between Academic Priorities Scale and Other Scales.

	Weighted Total	Campus Residents	Commuter Undergrad.	Commuter Graduate
DIRECT CORRELATIONS				
Campus Sources of Community	.21	-.01	.19	.24
Off-Campus Sources of Comm.	-.01	-.02	-.01	.04
Activities On-Campus	.19	-.01	.17	.19
Activities Off-Campus	.06	-.04	.06	.07
Attitudes Toward Campus Comm.	.15	.02	.13	.21
Importance of Employment	-.06	.01	.03	-.07
Experiences with Faculty	.03	.10	.05	.05
Cumulative GPA	-.15	-.01	-.12	-.08
PARTIALLING OUT SOCIAL PRIORITIES				
Campus Sources of Community	.12	-.28	.16	.14
Off-Campus Sources of Comm.	-.19	-.25	-.11	-.05
Activities On-Campus	.08	-.13	.13	.06
Activities Off-Campus	.01	-.04	.04	-.11
Attitudes Toward Campus Comm.	.09	-.09	.12	-.10
Importance of Employment	.04	.01	.07	-.02
Experiences with Faculty	.04	.25	-.02	.15
Cumulative GPA	-.02	-.04	-.03	-.21

In their direct forms, the correlations between academic priorities and the other scales are minimal. The only notable relationships are small positive ones between academic priorities and campus sources of community, on-campus activity levels, and attitudes toward community among commuters, and especially graduate students. For campus resident students, the direct correlations show virtually no link between students' desires for academic improvements and the other behavioral and attitudinal measures in this study. When campus resident's social priorities are partialled out, however, a negative relationship is revealed between their calls for academic improvements and their sources of community, both on- and off-campus. This suggests that campus residents who focus more exclusively on academics tend not to feel connected to others at school or in the off-campus community.

Students' academic performance, as indicated by their cumulative grade-point average, was generally not strongly linked with their calls for academic improvements, especially when partialling out the extent of their priorities for improvements in the campus's social climate. The notable exception to this is the -.21 partial correlation between academic priorities and GPA for commuter graduate students. The poorer performing members of this group may be slightly more apt to attribute their lack of success to deficits in Metro U's academic program.

Table 10 displays the same types of intercorrelation as in Table 9, but for the social priority's scale. In this case, the direct correlations suggest a closer link between concerns for improving the campus's social milieu and the other behavioral and attitudinal scales regarding community, especially for commuter students. The direct correlations reveal the same conflict between social concerns and employment that was reported earlier. These correlations also suggest that commuter undergraduates who favor primarily social improvements tend to have lower cumulative GPA's than those who focus less on improving social climate of college.

For the campus resident group, the direct correlations reveal virtually no association between these student's calls for social improvements and their attitudes toward and behaviors within the campus community. When the link between students' academic and social concerns is

disentangled, another picture emerges. The partial correlations in Table 10 reveal a moderate positive link between campus residents calls for social improvements and their involvement in the campus community. Note that these associations mirror the corresponding negative partial correlations between academic priorities and campus involvements shown in Table 9.

Table 10. Correlations Between Social Priorities Scale and Other Scales.

	Weighted Total	Campus Residents	Commuter Undergrad.	Commuter Graduate
DIRECT CORRELATIONS				
Campus Sources of Community	.32	.03	.28	.23
Off-Campus Sources of Comm.	.08	.02	.14	.07
Activities On-Campus	.39	.18	.32	.27
Activities Off-Campus	.11	.07	.13	.09
Attitudes Toward Campus Comm.	.31	.10	.28	.26
Importance of Employment	-.28	-.11	-.23	-.04
Experiences with Faculty	.04	-.04	.08	.09
Cumulative GPA	-.25	.03	-.25	-.02
PARTIALLING OUT ACADEMIC PRIORITIES				
Campus Sources of Community	.27	.37	.21	.25
Off-Campus Sources of Comm.	.13	.35	.17	.05
Activities On-Campus	.31	.28	.24	.26
Activities Off-Campus	.12	.09	.10	.17
Attitudes Toward Campus Comm.	.32	.19	.28	.26
Importance of Employment	-.27	-.10	-.28	.01
Experiences with Faculty	.03	.03	.03	.10
Cumulative GPA	-.20	-.02	-.20	.09

Conclusion

The closest thing approaching consensus for students at this metropolitan university lies in the academic arena. There seems to be convergence around the theme of placing academic priorities above the social or recreational, but students at Metro U do not appear to have a clearly

delineated concept of academic or intellectual community. Their ideas about community focus on activities with friends and family and a large portion of these activities occur in the metropolitan area's rich array of off-campus settings.

In the social arena, large differences were found according to whether students live on or off campus and their level of studies. Campus residents showed a more balanced concern between social and academic priorities, although academic priorities were still predominate. Commuter graduate students, on the other hand, expressed interests in mostly academic areas. They also indicated the close relationship between their current career interests and obligations and their academic pursuits and, at the same time, the conflicting pressures brought on by both sets of commitments. Commuter undergraduate students were somewhere between these two groups in both their academic and social concerns, and in their obligations outside the college environment.

Numerous studies exist comparing differences between residential students and commuters in their "aesthetic, cultural, and intellectual attitudes and values" (see Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). There is little research, though, on off-campus activities and the relationship of this type of involvement to persistence, achievement, and post-graduation civic involvement. This takes on added relevance for metropolitan institutions with a large array of off-campus cultural, educational, aesthetic, and recreational activities available to all students, commuters and residential students. As also reported in Pascarella and Terenzini (p. 307), Chickering and Kuper (1971) found greater increases in measures of cultural and intellectual interests among commuting students than among resident students. The present study, which is simply a snapshot in time, pontes to fairly high levels of off-campus involvements among all students--commuters and campus residents alike.

The reported infrequent contact with faculty in this study is particularly troublesome, especially as it relates to community building. Involvement with faculty is strongly associated with satisfaction with the institution, personal growth, academic attainment, retention and student

involvement (Astin, 1993). It also appears from the reports of Light (1990) and Spitzberg and Thorndike (1992) and Astin (1993) that faculty, even at research institutions, are available to students who seek out such involvement. Results from this study show that faculty interaction is a correlate of some aspects of community, but not of all aspects.

The composite picture revealed by this study is not a simple one. It suggests that there are complex interdependencies among students' ideas about community, their behavioral involvements in the community, and their educational and work obligations. Many of these interdependencies generate conflicting pressures between the different areas of students' lives. University administrators, particularly in metropolitan area institutions, must become more aware of these complex relationships if they hope to facilitate student progress through their academic programs. The relatively high rates of student attrition at metropolitan area universities are understandable within the context of these competing pressures.

As Levitz and Noel (1990) and Spitzberg and Thorndike (1992) point out, the challenge for Metro U and other similar institutions is to figure out how to connect their students with the academic and social environment of the institution. The present study suggests that the common denominator for this connection probably lies within the academic environment but students do not have well-defined concepts of what an academic or intellectual community entails. The results of this study do not suggest that metropolitan universities abandon a social and recreational agenda. Rather, they propose that subcommunities within the larger community may need support and that planning to create community by emphasizing a single activity will not address the primary concerns of most students. Plans for a football program at Metro U were deferred indefinitely. University faculty and administrators are now paying closer attention to defining, developing, and promoting the academic community for students.

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August 16, 1993

MEMORANDUM

TO: Professor Robert Goodrich
Chair, Department of Mathematics Self-Study Committee

FROM: Jean Endo
Office of Planning and Institutional Research

SUBJECT: Historical Data for the Self-Study

We are providing you with additional tables for your upcoming self-study report. These include:

- General Fund Expenditures, FY 1990-91 to FY 1992-93
  -classified staff
  -hourly wages
  -operating expenses
  -capital outlay
- Rostered Instructional Faculty FTE (includes part-time ranked faculty), AY 1983-84 to AY 1992-93
- Demographic Characteristics of Full-time Resident Instruction Faculty, AY 1988-98 to AY 1992-93
  -by Gender
  -by Ethnicity
- Degrees Awarded by Level, FY 1988-89 to FY 1992-93
  -by Gender
  -by Ethnicity
  -listing of degree recipients by level
- Mean Grades Awarded by Unit by Level of Course, Fall 1988 to Fall 1992
- Mean Grade Point Averages by Level by Primary Major, Fall 1988 to Fall 1992

Carl Sorenson is working diligently to clean up the combined course information file which contains the student credit hour data and other workload information that you requested for FY 1992-93. He plans to complete this effort towards the end of this month. Because we are aware of your timeframe, we will send you the information as soon as it becomes available.